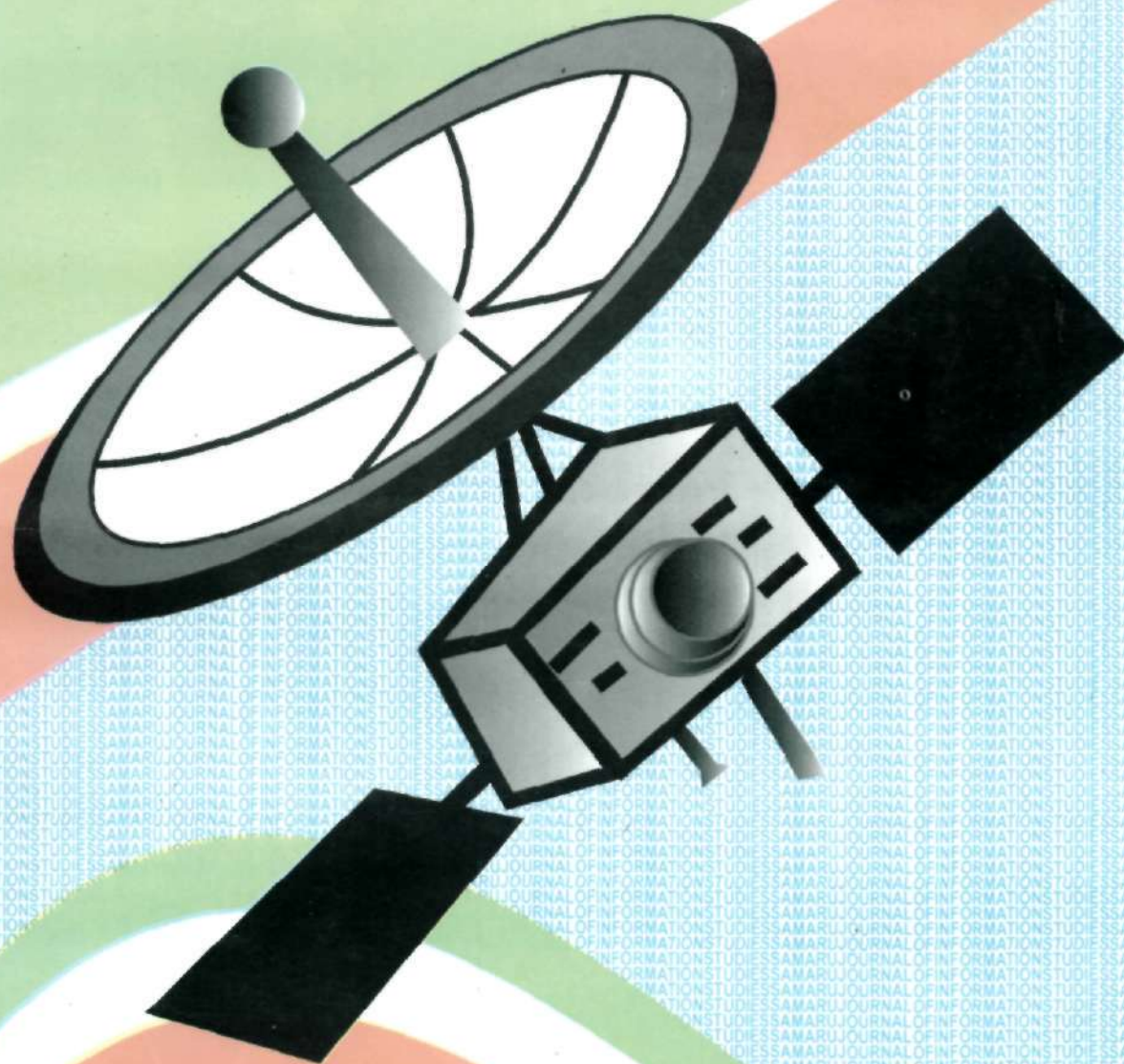


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Assessment of Social Networks used by Undergraduate Students in Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Aliyu AHMED, Maryam YUNUSA & Bilkisu LAWAL

Abstract

Social networks have cut across all facets of society with its pros and cons. It has transformed and impacted on communication, learning, research and education in general. Students are spending much of their time on social networks and are considered the largest category that uses such application. This study tries to explore the social networks used by undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Some literatures related to the study were reviewed accordingly and research objectives were outlined. The survey answers these questions and the result was presented using descriptive statistics. The findings have shown that undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University have access to social networks and their exposure to the site has influence on their academic performance. Moreover, Facebook and WhatsApp is the most used social networking sites by the students. The findings were adequately so also summary, conclusion and recommendations were provided for.

Keywords: Influence, Social network, Undergraduate student and Academic performance.

Introduction

The world has changed rapidly by the evolution of technology; this has resulted into the use of technology as the best medium to explore the wide area of knowledge. The evolution of internet technology has led to the use of social networking sites as the best medium for communication. Two-third of the world internet population visit social networking or blogging sites, thus serving as a communication and connection tool. Social networking is built on the idea of how people know, should know and interact with each other. It gives people the power to share, making the world more open and

connected. Nowadays, social networking has a vital influence on our live as it help a lot in every field of life such as political field, economic field and educational field. Social networking has become the most important communication tools among people. However, social network exist on the internet websites where millions of people share interest on certain disciplines and make available to members of these networks various shared files, photos and videos, create blogs and send messages and conduct real time conversations. These networks are described as social, because they allow communication with friends and colleagues, study and strengthen the ties between members of these networks in the space of the internet (Jalal, 2012).

Problem Statement

Since the advent of social networking sites, academic performance of students is facing a lot of neglect and challenges. Students reading habits these days are distracted with the persistent use of social networking sites. Thus they now become passive readers who prefer to sit back, only to be entertained, and not to put effort in reading. As stated by Ndaku (2013), students spend a lot of time on social networking sites than in their academic activities and this affect their academic performance. Social networking sites have also become easiest point of access to pornography and other obscenities which distract students reading habits (Kur&Olisah, 2007). There have been a lot of debates on various platforms and media as to the impact of social media on society and specifically, its effect on education. Some of these studies found a drop in students grades and academic performance, and lack of time for studies as consequences of social media network participation (Banquil et al, 2009; Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010; Ndaku, 2013).

Over the years, social networking sites have metamorphosed from few-user-based sites into phenomena that have niches for billions of users. The growth and popularity of social networking sites have generated

concerns among school authorities, communication experts and socio-psychological researchers about the benefits and potential risks facing undergraduates, as they engage in online social networking to cater for their social and information needs rather than oral or face-to-face communication. Furthermore, the risk of social networking sites on oral communication among their users has increased. Sherry Turkle (2012), asserted that the convenience the social networking sites give users to communicate with one another can damage their inter-personal communication.

With the availability of free access to wireless internet services in Ahmadu Bello University, some students spend the whole night chatting with friends and watching unnecessary movies instead of reading and studying. This study is concerned with the social networks used by undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Objectives of the Study

The study sought to address the following objectives:-

- i. To examine the various categories of social networking sites used by undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

- ii. To examine the extent of usage of social networking sites by undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- iii. To identify the information access on social network sites by undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Literature Review

A network consists of two or more computers that are linked in order to share Resources (such as printers and CDs), exchange files, or allow electronic Communications, the computers on a network may be linked through cables, telephone lines, radio waves, satellites, or in farred light beams (Florida Centre for Instructional Technology, 2013). Furthermore, Beal, (2016) defined network as "A group of two or more computer system linked together to share resources". From the foregoing definitions, a network is a group of computers and other devices connected in some ways so as to be able to exchange data, which is the collection of computers, printers and other equipment that is connected together so that they can communicate with each other. "Networking is referred to as the connection of two or more computers to communicate with one

another, that is when millions of computers in different locations around the

world are connected together to allow users send and receive messages to one another" (Olawepo&Oyedepo, 2008). Networking is the construction, design, and use of a network, including the physical (cabling, hub, bridge, switch, router, and so forth), the selection and use of telecommunication protocol and computer software for using and managing the network, and the establishment of operation policies and procedures related to the network (Rouse, 2006). Generally, networking is the act of making contact and exchanging information with other people, groups and institutions to develop mutually beneficial relationships, or to access and share information between computers.

Social network is a website that allows you to connect with friends and family, Share photos, videos, music and other personal information with either a select group of friends or a wider group of people depending on the settings you selects,

(www.affilorama.com/internet101/socialnetwork). Social network alternatively referred to as a virtual community or profile site, a website that brings people together to talk, share idea and interests, or make new friends (www.computerhope.com). Therefore,

social network is a website that allows people to communicate and share information on the internet using a computer or mobile. Social networking on the other hand, is the latest technological explosion in the world of information. According to Adomi and Ejirefe (2012), "social networking refers to activities, practices and behavior among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge and opinion using interactive media. Kaplan and Halein (2010), defined social media as a group of internet based application that is built on ideological and technological foundation of web 2.0 and that allows the creation and exchange of user generated contents. The interactive media are web base applications that make it possible to create and easily transmit content in form of texts, pictures, videos and audios". Social networking is an online service, platform, or site that focuses on building and reflecting of social network or social relations among people, who, for example share interests and/or activities (Gajjala, 2007). Social networking sites allow users to share activities, event, ideas and interest within their individual network. Social networking generally refers to the interaction of people using various social media platforms with the absence of geographical and time barriers. A social network is a dedicated websites or application developed and created to bring

people together making communication around the world possible. It has been discovered that over 2.2 billion people are active on social media platforms (Oloyede, 2005). During 2005, online social network sites like MySpace and face book become common destination for young people in United State. Throughout the country, young people were logging in, creating elaborate files, publicly articulating their relationships with other participants and writing extensive comments back and forth. By early 2006, many considered participation on the key social network site, My space essentially to be seen as cool at school. This trend had shortly moved to other part of the world like Africa, Europe, and Asia, which is now considered to be the highest, when it comes to internet usage for online social networking. While not all teens are users of social networking sites, these sites developed significant cultural resonance among teens globally in short period of time. Although the luster has since faded and teens are not nearly as infatuated with these sites (My space) as they once were, they continue to be an important part of teen's social life. In recent times we witnessed the development of more social media platform for online social networking like Twitter, Google +, Instagram, WhatsApp and others, and this has expanded the level of networking and increased the use of social

media for both private and corporate purposes (Oloyede, 2005).

Students use the social networking sites for various reasons. Some use it to exchange ideas, feelings, personal information, pictures and videos (Loving & Ochoa, 2010). It is used for the purpose of connecting friends and families (regardless of location), keeping up with the latest event and happenings, and academic purpose. To consider the positive sites of social networking, Lusk (2010) posits that online communities can afford students academic assistance and support. In the field of education, social networking sites offer students the opportunity to connect with other students, educators, administrators, alumni, both within and outside his current institution. Scholars praise social networking tools for their capability to attract, motivate and engage students with meaningful communicative practice, content exchange and collaboration. It also contribute to the different perspectives of the students, forums such as chats rooms that exist in social networking provides opportunities to exchange views on topics, which increase the opportunities to take advantage of views and proposals and their

integration with the views of the students, and helps in the formation of a solid foundation for students in their knowledge purpose of. In Nigeria, there has been concern on the possible effect of day time and sometime all night browsing on students reading time. Oji (2007) noted that the growing incidence of students using the internet not necessarily for academic purposes, but for anti social activities is at an astonishing rated.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the survey research. Survey is designed to measure experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and opinions (Raygor, 2005). Population of the study is the aggregation of elements that the researcher actually focuses on sampling, the population of this study therefore, consists of 400level students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The instrument adopted for data collection of the study is questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed for undergraduate students of Faculty of Education in which the most applicable answers were to be chosen by respondents from the alternative answers provided.

Data Analysis**Table 1: Social Network Sites used by Undergraduate Students of Faculty of Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria**

Social Network Sites		Frequency		Percentage	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	Facebook	18	2	90%	10%
2.	WhatsApp	17	3	85%	15%
3.	2go	5	15	25%	75%
4.	Twitter	5	15	25%	75%
5.	YouTube	7	13	35%	65%
6.	Messenger	5	15	25%	75%
7.	Google+	10	10	50%	50%
8.	MySpace	-	20	0%	100%
9.	LinkedIn	1	19	5%	95%

Table 1 shows that Facebook has the highest users, 18 respondents which is 90% of the total population participate on Facebook, followed by WhatsApp with 17 respondents which is 85% are participants. Google+ is the third with 10 respondents which is 50% use it. YouTube has 35% of

users while 2go, twitter and messenger have 25% users respectively. MySpace and LinkedIn are not mostly used by the respondents as none of them participate on MySpace and only 5% of the respondents use LinkedIn.

Table 2: Extent of Use of Social Networking Sites by Undergraduate Students of Faculty of Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Extent of Use		Frequency		Percentage	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
A	Morning time	6	3	30%	15%
B	Afternoon time	3	1	15%	5%
C	Night time	17	-	85%	0%

Table 2 shows that 17 respondents which is 85% of the total respondents normally use the social network site at night, while 6 respondents which is 30% use social

network during morning time and only 3 respondents which is 15% uses the sites during the day time.

Table 3: Extent of Influence of Social Networks on Undergraduate Students of Faculty of Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

S/N	Statement	Frequency	Percentage
a	Very influential	7	35%
b	Influential	5	25%
c	Not influential	2	10%
d	Undecided	6	30%

From table 3, it could be seen that 7 respondents which is 35% are with the opinion that social network is very influential on students G.P.A and 5 respondents which is 25% says social

network is influential on students G.P.A. On the other hand, 2 respondents which is 10% are with the view that social network is not influential on students G.P.A while 6 respondents which is 30% are undecided.

Table 4: Hours spend on Social Networks by Undergraduate Students of Faculty of Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

S/N	Statement	Frequency	Percentage
a	1-2 hrs.	13	65%
b	3-4 hrs.	14	70%
c	5-6 hrs.	2	10%

From table 4, 13 of the total respondents which are 65% spend 1-2 hours on social network, whereas 14 respondents which are

70% spend 3-4 hours on social network while 2 respondents which are 10% spend 5-6 hours and the rest are undecided.

Table 5: Type of Information Access on Social Network Sitesby Undergraduate Students of Faculty of Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Type of Information		Frequency		Percentage	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
a	Personal information	10	10	50%	50%
b	Business information	5	15	10%	90%
c	Academic information	13	7	65%	25%
d	Political information	10	10	50%	50%
e	Social information	13	7	65%	25%
f	Religious information	8	12	40%	60%
g	News	15	5	75%	25%
h	Entertainment	10	10	50%	50%

In table 5, 75% of the respondents' access news on social network sites, while 65% of the total respondents access academic and social information respectively, likewise 10 respondents which is 50% access personal information, political information and entertainment. Eight respondents which 40% go for religious information while only 5 respondents which are 10% access religious information.

Findings

The following are the summary of findings:

- 1 Face book is one of the most popular social media sites used by majority of the students. WhatSapp, 2go, twitter are the other social networking sites the students patronized.
- 2 Students spend 1-4 hours on social network chatting with friends, building academic relationship and connecting with their school mates during both morning and night hours of the day. Due to a great number of times spent on social networking activities, the academic performance of students suffer setback which could lead to poor G.P.A.
- 3 The findings also show that students are often online in various social networking activities such as accessing academic information,

news and entertainment, and the group of people they normally communicated with their peer friends, family and classmates.

Conclusion

Based on the findings drawn from this study, social network site has been seen as a source of direct response to the need of information, communication, dissemination, and discussing. The researcher sees the reason why famous media scholars agreed that technology can be used in ways beneficial and otherwise. Finally, it can be concluded that exposure to social network by undergraduate students is high and this has negative effect on academic performance.

Recommendations

This study was able to expose various insights into the use of social network by undergraduate students and other issues that arose. Therefore, the following recommendations have been made:

- i. Students who are heavy users of social network sites, should moderate the use of the sites to avoid addiction and create a balance between their offline and online activities while using the sites.
- ii. Social networking sites should be expanded and new pages should be created to enhance academic

activities to avoid setbacks in the students' academic performance.

- iii. The students should create a balance between chit-chatting and academic activities; more attention should be directed to research. Tertiary institutions should organize a seminar to enlighten students on the not too-good aspects of using social networking sites.

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